

ENGINE  
Rule Booklet

# System Guide

by David "Zeb" Cook



Last Home

JEN 92





# System Guide



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## **Credits:**

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# Introduction & Welcome

## Welcome to the AMAZING ENGINE™ System

### What is this?

The AMAZING ENGINE™ game system is more than just a single role-playing game, be it fantasy world or science fiction universe. Instead, the AMAZING ENGINE system provides the basics for creating a wide variety of role-playing settings — anything from consulting detectives investigating fairy realms to deadly aliens stalking hi-tech space marines — and as much as can be imagined in-between.

To do this, the AMAZING ENGINE system consists of two parts. The first part is this book, the *System Guide*. Here one finds the basic rules for creating player characters and having those characters use skills, fight, and move. These rules and procedures are found in all AMAZING ENGINE settings. The System Guide also details how players and GMs can change settings while transferring benefits player characters have gained from previous play.

The second part of the AMAZING ENGINE system are the different settings to play in. Each setting is called a *universe* and is described in its own book, naturally called *Universe Books*. Each Universe Book is a complete role-playing game and only requires the System Guide to play. It is not necessary to buy every Universe Book in order to play in the AMAZING ENGINE system. Universes range from hard science-fiction worlds to strange fantasies set on alternate Earths. Gamemasters can run campaigns in just a single universe, run science-fiction or fantasy universes only, or play in both trying whatever universe catches their fancy.

The AMAZING ENGINE system is more than just a collection of universes. In the AMAZING ENGINE system the advances a player character gains in one universe can be used to help player characters in another universe. Starting in a new

AMAZING ENGINE setting does not mean starting over from the beginning; this means players and gamemasters can experiment with the wide range of universes. For example, the experience earned when playing space marine Sergeant Kilrake in the BUGHUNTERS™ universe can be applied to Lord Manchester, Ambassador to the Court of Queen Titania, in the *For Faerie*, Queen, and Country universe.

## The Player Core and Player Character

The heart of the AMAZING ENGINE game is the combination of the *player core* and the *player character*. The player core is the framework from which player characters are built. The same player core is used from universe to universe.

The player character is the actual collection of numbers, skills, and other abilities used to role-play in a given universe. A player will have a different character in each universe, but these characters may all be generated from the same player core.

When the player core is created, the player must make certain decisions about the type of character he wants. He can choose different emphases for the four different pools (see below) that define a character: Physique, Intellect, Spirit, and Influence. These choices, made when the player core is created, are reflected in all the player characters spun off from that core. Each pool offers a pair of choices. Does he want his characters to be generally strong and influential, or does he prefer ones who are intellectually superior and athletic? For example, physical characters can choose to be muscular or quick; spiritual characters can be endowed with psychic potential or strong wills.

Of course, the same ability is not always the best in every universe. A muscular but psychically weak character who does quite well in the BUGHUNTERS universe may be at a disadvan-

# The Player Core & Player Character

Ability Pools (the player core)			
Physique	Intellect	Spirit	Influence
Attributes (the player character)			
Fitness	Learning	Psyche	Charm
Reflexes	Intuition	Willpower	Position

tage in the MAGITECH™ universe, where wizards who need strong psyches to manipulate magic are a common sight. Therefore, the same player character is not used in every universe. Instead, the player core allows each character to be tailored to the needs of that universe — within the limits of the player's original choices. Players who emphasized physique will still have characters who are either faster or stronger than most others. Those who chose intellect will have smarter characters, either in learned skills or intuitive understanding. The player core forms the archetype around which a single player's characters are all set.

## The Ability Pools

The player core consists of four different ability pools: Physique, Intellect, Spirit, and Influence. Each ability pool has two attributes that define the player character. When creating the player core, only the ability pools are used. When creating a player character, or playing that character in a single universe, only attributes are used. Once the first character is generated, ability pools never affect the actions of a player character and attributes do not affect ability pools. The four attribute pools are:

*Physique.* This pool is used to measure all things physical about the character. Fitness and

Reflexes are the two attributes of Physique.

*Intellect.* This defines the character's mental power for learning useful skills. Learning and Intuition are the two attributes of this pool.

*Spirit.* This ability pool is the source of the character's mystical potential and strength of will. Psyche and Willpower are paired under Spirit.

*Influence.* This pool is used to generate the values that affect the character's abilities at relating with others. The attributes of Charm and Position are grouped under this pool.

## The Attributes

As noted, each ability pool has two attributes. These eight attributes are more precise breakdowns of each ability pool, and define a specific character in a specific universe. Beginning characters' attributes have values from 3 to 50, with 25 being the approximate average score. (Characters generated later in a campaign may have higher scores.) The eight attributes are:

**Fitness:** A measure of bodily strength, Fitness reflects the character's muscles and his ability to use them effectively. Fitness affects the amount of damage a character can cause in hand-to-hand combat, and the amount of body damage he can take.

# The Player Core & Player Character

**Reflexes:** This attribute measures the character's reaction speed and hand-eye coordination. It is used for scoring a hit in combat, and (along with Willpower) determines the amount of stamina damage the character can take.

**Learning:** This measures the character's knowledge in areas requiring long training or study. In some universes, it may represent a degree or period of schooling. Learning affects number and type of, and chance of success at, skills.

**Intuition:** This encompasses the character's innate wit, street smarts, ability to remember random trivia, comprehension, and worldliness. Intuition is applied to skills picked up through observation and practice without long periods of study. Like Learning, Intuition affects the number and type of, and chance of success at, skills.

**Psyche:** The universe is filled with more things than can be measured or imagined by physical science — or at least an AMAZING ENGINE™ universe may be. Psyche represents the character's potential to perceive and manipulate the spiritual and metaphysical world. In a given universe, this may determine the character's magic ability, psychic powers, or just plain old luck.

**Willpower:** As a measure of mental fortitude, this ability indicates how well the character can endure pain (in the form of fatigue points), block mental attacks, or resist psychic possession. It also determines the character's chance to tax his attribute scores, pushing himself to the utmost.

**Charm:** In role-playing games, player characters must interact. This attribute rates the character's personality and the way others are disposed toward him. Charm is used to influence reactions of NPCs and can affect the success of some magical and psychic skills.

**Position:** This attribute provides a rough rank for the character on the ladder of social climbing, whatever form the rungs take in each universe. Depending on the universe, Position may trans-

late *into* class, title, military rank, fame (or infamy), wealth, or even occupation. Position is used to secure special resources, deal with officials, and finance large purchases, and at special social functions.

## Generating the Player Core and Player Character

The process of creating the player core is woven into the steps of creating the first player character. As you create this character, you will have to make a number of choices for the core that affect the character. In later steps, numbers rolled for the player character's attributes will affect the final results of the player core. Thus the procedure for creating your first character (and player core) is slightly different from that used when creating later characters from the same core.

The first task in creating a character is to decide what kind of character you like. You can do this before even knowing what universe your GM is going to use. Do you prefer strong characters, able and ready to fight; charmers who can talk their way out of any situation; intellectuals good at solving problems; or magically charged wonderworkers? Think about your ideal character.

The next step is to translate your ideal into game form by ranking the four ability pools of the player core from best to worst. Using the Player Core Form provided at the back of this booklet (or a sheet of paper), write the numeral 1 (best)

Wolfgang is ready to create his first character for an AMAZING ENGINE game and so spends a little time thinking about what he wants. Having just read an interesting story about thieves, Wolfgang decides he would like a confidence man, quick-fingered and smooth-talking with a modest chance of magical skill.

# The Player Core & Player Character

Based on his ideal confidence man, Wolfgang now must decide how to rank the four ability pools. Since he wants his character to be a very smooth talker, somewhat light-fingered, with a smattering of mystical ability, he rates the pools as shown.

Physique	Intellect	Spirit	Influence
2	4	3	1

next to the pool you want to have the best chance for high scores. Then rank the remaining pools (2,3, and 4), remembering that the one ranked lowest will usually have the lowest scores. Later die rolls do not guarantee anything.

In the third step, you begin to create your first actual player character by choosing four of the eight attributes and rolling 4 ten-sided dice (4d10) for each of these. Add the four dice together and note the total in the space next to the attribute name. (Do this in pencil, since the attributes may be modified in a future step.) The attributes chosen need not correspond to the ranking of attribute pools already done. You can choose one, both, or no attributes of a particular pool in this step.

Now, scores are generated for the four remaining attributes by rolling three ten-sided dice and totalling the result for each.

Once the basic numbers have been generated, modify the attributes based on the rankings you made to the ability pools of the player core. The rankings determine the number of points available to divide between the two attributes of that ability pool. You can divide these points however you wish, but no ability can have more than 50 total points. The table below lists the points available for each ranking.

The modified numbers are your player character's attribute scores.

With the player character attributes determined, you can now finish creating the player

Wolfgang now selects four attributes as his primary concerns. Since he really wants to have a personable character, he chooses Charm. To ensure his light-fingered abilities, his second choice is Reflexes. After pondering, Wolfgang realizes his character could end up short in street smarts, so he chooses Intuition, even though it is in his lowest ranked ability pool (Intellect). For his last choice, Wolfgang decides to take a chance and chooses Position, so he can have a sophisticated con artist. He then rolls four ten-sided dice for each ability and gets the following results.

Physique Rank: 2	Intellect Rank: 4	Spirit Rank: 3	Influence Rank: 1
Fitness	Learning	Psyche	Charm: 17
Reflexes: 31	Intuition: 28	Willpower	Position: 23



# The Player Core & Player Character

Wolfgang now fills out the remaining attribute scores by rolling 3d10 for each and noting the number. When he is finished, his character sheet looks like this:			
Physique Rank: 2	Intellect Rank: 4	Spirit Rank: 3	Influence Rank: 1
Fitness: 16	Learning: 23	Psyche: 21	Charm: 17
Reflexes: 31	Intuition: 28	Willpower: 7	Position: 23

core by figuring your ability pool ratings. You do this by adding the two attribute scores of the pool and dividing this total by ten. Fractions should be rounded up to the next larger number. Write this number next to "Dice." Although this total has no effect on a character during play, it is necessary for the creation of characters in other universes.

## Creating Characters from the Player Core

Once you have created a player core, you are ready to create new characters for other AMAZING ENGINE™ settings. These charac-

Ranking	Points
1st	15
2nd	10
3rd	5
4th	0

ters are made using the player core, and follow different steps from those you used for your first or prime character.

Characters built from the core are made by assigning dice to the different attributes. Each ability pool has a dice rating. These dice are divided (in whole numbers) between the paired attributes of that pool. In addition, every new character has seven "free" dice that can be assigned as the player wishes. However, unless stated otherwise by the rules of the new universe, no attribute can have more than five dice assigned to it. Once all dice have been assigned, the appropriate numbers are rolled and totalled, just as before.

After the dice are assigned and rolled, the next step proceeds just as with the first character you created. Using the same rankings you assigned to your ability pools, you use the points each rank gives (15, 10, 5, and 0) to modify your character's attributes. As before, no character can have an attribute rating higher than 50.

Once the attributes have been modified, the character creation process stops. Do not recalculate the dice ratings for the player core. The dice ratings can *only* be altered by spending experience points your characters earn.

Multiple characters can be created from the same player core; however, you should have only

# The Player Core & Player Character

Wolfgang starts with his first ranked ability pool, Influence. He had bad luck rolling for Charm (and he really wants a personable character), so he adds all 15 points to Charm. In Physique, Fitness is a little low, so he splits the 10 available points between Fitness and Reflexes, 5 each. Under Spirit, the character's Willpower is dangerously low, so Wolfgang feels he has no choice but to add all 5 points to that score, even though he would like a better Psyche. He rolled well for his Intellect attributes which is fortunate since he cannot modify either score.

Physique Rank: 2	Intellect Rank: 4	Spirit Rank: 3	Influence Rank: 1
Fitness: 21	Learning: 23	Psyche: 21	Charm: 32
Reflexes: 36	Intuition: 28	Willpower: 12	Position: 23

Looking over his final attributes, Wolfgang decides his character is nimble-fingered (high Reflexes) and smooth (good Charm) with a good sense for danger (from his good Intuition). His character is not the strongest or healthiest (only about average Fitness), and he needs to work on his psychic abilities (only average Psyche). Finally, with a Willpower of 12, Wolfgang decides his thief is something of a craven fellow, who "runs away, and lives to fight another day," more often than not.

## Life and Death

one character per universe. Multiple characters per core in the same universe would give you an unfair advantage over players with only a single character per core.

A crucial part of any role-playing game is the risk of injury and death to your character. Every time your character tries something dangerous or gets in a fight, he can suffer damage. This damage is

Having created his character statistics, Wolfgang now finishes creating his player pool.

Physique Rank: 2 Dice: 6	Intellect Rank: 4 Dice: 6	Spirit Rank: 3 Dice: 4	Influence Rank: 1 Dice: 6
Fitness: 21	Learning: 23	Psyche: 21	Charm: 32
Reflexes: 36	Intuition: 28	Willpower: 12	Position: 23

$$(21+36)/10 = 5.7$$

$$(23+28)/10 = 5.1$$

$$(21 + 12)/10 = 3.3$$

$$(32 + 23)/10 = 5.5$$

# The Player Core & Player Character

<p>After playing for some time in a fantasy campaign, Wolfgang's GM decides to switch to a science-fiction universe. Since there is no magic in this SF universe (and since he's getting tired of playing thieves and scoundrels), Wolfgang once more chooses a role he might like to play. Knowing from his core that his characters will tend to be strong in Physique and Influence, Wolfgang decides to try for a hard-bitten smuggler captain. He divides his pool dice and then assigns his "free" dice to Fitness, Willpower (because it was very low), and Position.</p>				
Physique Rank: 2 Dice: 6	Intellect Rank: 4 Dice: 6	Spirit Rank: 3 Dice: 4	Influence Rank: 1 Dice: 6	
Fitness: 5 dice	Learning: 3 dice	Psyche: 3 die	Charm: 4 dice	
Reflexes: 3 dice	Intuition: 3 dice	Willpower: 4 dice	Position: 4 dice	
<p>After all the dice are assigned, Wolfgang rolls and notes the totals for each to get the following results.</p>				
Fitness: 26	Learning: 18	Psyche: 23	Charm: 24	
Reflexes: 13	Intuition: 29	Willpower: 17	Position: 25	
<p>Once again, Wolfgang has rolled incredibly well for Intuition and not as well for Willpower.</p>				

<p>Looking at his new character, Wolfgang once again starts with the first-ranked ability pool, Influence. For this universe, he wants an important character and so puts all 15 points to Position. In the second ranked Physique pool, he give 4 points to Fitness and 6 to Reflexes, while for the third-ranked Spirit, he gives all 5 points to Willpower.</p>				
Fitness: 30	Learning: 18	Psyche: 23	Charm: 24	
Reflexes: 19	Intuition: 29	Willpower: 23	Position: 40	
<p>With these points, Wolfgang's new character is ready.</p>				

# The Player Core & Player Character

measured in points, subtracted from a character's total. In the AMAZING ENGINE™ system, there are two types of damage a character can suffer: *stamina* and *body*.

Stamina damage is caused by the host of bruises, grazes, cuts, nicks, burns, jolts, and effort spent avoiding serious harm. A character who loses all his stamina points does not die — she falls unconscious. (This may result in her death, of course). Unconsciousness comes from the combined effects of pain, blood loss, concussion, shock, and just plain exhaustion. If an attack causes 10 points of stamina damage and your character has only 4 remaining, the excess points are ignored. Your character just falls unconscious. However, future attacks will automatically cause body damage.

Body damage represents wounds and injuries that seriously threaten the health of your character. These include bullet holes, stab wounds, broken bones, serious burns, and other unpleasant-ries. When your character loses all her body points, she is dead.

Just how many stamina and body points your character has will vary from universe to universe. In some universes, such as BUGHUNTERS™, combat is one of the main character activities. Here, your character will need lots of stamina and body points. In other universes, For *Faerie, Queen, and Country* for one, combat is a last resort when all other options have failed. Characters in such a universe will have lower body and stamina points to discourage the desire to solve every problem with guns.

In all universes, however, stamina and body points are calculated from the same ability scores. Fitness is used to figure body points. Characters with high Fitness scores will always have more body points than those with poor Fitness scores, no matter what the universe is. Willpower and Reflexes combined are the base for stamina points, so that those with high scores in these areas will have more stamina points than those

with low ones.

Injuries and wounds do heal, allowing your character to regain lost stamina and body points. Because the two types of damage reflect different causes, each heals at a different rate. One stamina point is regained in 10-60 minutes (1d6 x 10). Remaining stamina points are regained at the rate of 1d10 per eight hours (2d10 per eight hours of bed rest or sound sleep). Body points are healed at the rate of 1 point per week. Rest, nursing, and hospitalization can increase the rate of healing — how much depends on the universe. After all, the hospitals of a pseudo-Victorian England are nothing like the facilities of a 23<sup>rd</sup> century starship!

## Beyond the Player Core

In any AMAZING ENGINE™ universe, your player character is more than just the sum of his ability scores. There are many other choices to make; however, these depend on the universe your character is playing in. While all the choices are defined for your character in the appropriate universe book, the range of options you face are explained in general terms here.

## Base Adjustment

Every universe of the AMAZING ENGINE system is different, so a suitable starting character for one universe may not be suitable in another. Therefore, a given universe may apply a *base adjustment* to your character's ability scores. This adjustment increases every ability by the same amount. The adjustment must be made after your character's Attribute pools are calculated.

## Species

Up to now, nothing has been said of just *what* your character is, and from the examples it is easy to assume everyone is human. However, this does



# The Player Core & Player Character

not have to be the case. In some universes, you may have the opportunity to create characters that are members of some other species. Your character could have fairy blood, be an intelligent being evolved from dinosaurs, belong to an alien race from another star, or even be a combination of man and machine. The universes of the AMAZING ENGINE™ system have all of science fiction and fantasy to choose from, so the possibilities are near endless!

## Gender

There is nothing in the core rules that determines the sex of your character. In most universes you can choose your character's gender freely. However, in some cases there may be special restrictions or different choices (particularly when playing an alien race!). The universe book will describe any of these that apply.

## Handedness

For convenience, your character uses the same hand as you do in real life. Of course, if you're playing a six-armed alien from Tau Ceti, special rules will apply.

## Appearance

Again, unless your character is an alien, you can describe your character's looks however it pleases you. He could be tall and willowy or she could be short and blunt. It is recommended that you create a character description that matches the ability ratings. If your character has a miserable Fitness, it doesn't do to imagine him as strong and muscular, for example.

## Professions and Skills

At some point in her imaginary life, your character probably went to school, learned a trade, or at

least got an education on the street. In the AMAZING ENGINE system, what your character knows is defined by her profession. No matter what the universe, every character has a profession, but these vary from universe to universe. In a Victorian fantasy your character might be a consulting detective, navy ensign, consul of the Foreign Office, Oxford don, or medium. A completely different set of professions exist in a world of high space opera — space freighter captain, smuggler, alien spy, and psychic are only a few possibilities.

Likewise, the exact benefits of a profession can vary from universe to universe. The Victorian consulting detective (i.e. Sherlock Holmes) might know chemistry, fisticuffs, craniometry (measurement of people's skulls), heraldry, fencing, and material analysis; his counterpart in a world of modern magic could well possess empathy, spell analysis, handgun, karate, and flying carpet driving.

When you create a character for a campaign, your character must be given a profession from those offered in that particular universe. These will be listed in the universe book the GM has. This profession does not mean you must be a soldier, private detective, scholar, or whatever; it only says what you *were* and therefore what you know at the start of the campaign. From this basis you can make what you want of your character.

## Skill Groups

Every profession includes a listing of skill groups that fall within that profession's purview. These skill groups form the basis of what a character can learn given his profession. The skills categorized under each skill group are all related to that area of study or use, although the skills themselves may be very different. For example, a scholarly character could have "Humanities" as a study. Checking the information in that universe book,

# The Player Core & Player Character

## HUMANITIES

- Art History
  - by time period
  - by country
- History
  - by time period
  - by country
- Library Research
- Linguistics
- Literature
  - by time period
- Philosophy
- Rhetoric
- Theology

you find the listing for Humanities. Under it are several different scholarly areas and skills that all have to do with the humanities, though they are not always related to each other.

Certainly not every profession has the same skill groups. The scholar's studies in humanities would be ill-suited to the needs of a soldier of the 22nd century. Her skill groups would be things like Sidearms and Comm-Gear. The skills of the Sidearms group are vastly different from those of Humanities.

In addition to organizing skills, the skill groups also show the skill's order and ability check score, both important to using skills in play.

## Skill Order

In each list, skills are arranged in ever-smaller steps of specialization. Before a skill can be learned, your character must know all preceding steps. For example, on the Sidearms list given, your character must learn about Projectile Weapons before learning Energized Projectile Weapons. Each level of specialization is indicated by indentation, just as in an outline.

## Sidearms

- Coherent Beam
  - Laser rifle
  - Particle Beam
- Projectile
  - Antique
  - Assisted
  - Energized
  - Flechette

Once your character has learned the skill, he has a basic familiarity with everything grouped below it, allowing the character to attempt any specialty grouped underneath it. However, your character's chance of success decreases when attempting things of greater specialization than his or her training level. The degree of penalty depends on the number of levels between what your character knows and what he is trying to do. The exact penalty can vary from universe to universe. A typical penalty is -10 to your character's chance of success per level of difference.

## Enhancements

Some specialized skills do not require your character to gain new areas of learning or technique, but only call for the refinement of existing knowledge. Your character does not "learn" anything new; he only improves what he can already do. These specialties are called *enhancements* and are noted by an asterisk (\*) on the skill groups.

For example, under Antique Weapons, Blunderbuss and Rifled Musket are enhancements. The basics of loading and firing each are essentially the same, and the same goes for any other antique weapon (the larger skill category). The differences are that a character skilled in Blunderbuss is more familiar with the particular quirks

# The Player Core & Player Character

Skill Order  
Basic Skill  
Specialty  
Sub-specialty  
etc.  
Example #1  
Firearms (Basic skill)  
Modern weapons  
Antique weapons (Specialty)  
Blunderbuss\* (Sub-specialty, enhancement)  
Rifled Musket\* (Sub-specialty, enhancement)  
Example #2  
General Medicine (Basic Skill)  
Xeno-Biology (Specialty)  
Arcturean medicine (Sub-specialty)

of that weapon. The same does not apply when comparing Antique Weapon to Modern Weapon, or Medicine and its specialty Xeno-Biology. In these cases the skills involve new learning, new techniques, and new facts that must be mastered in addition to the basic understanding of Firearms (or Medicine).

Knowing an enhancement gives a character a bonus (typically +10) when using that particular skill — but *only* that skill. A character who knows Blunderbuss and uses that weapon gains a

+ 10 to his skill roll. He would not gain the same bonus when using a rifled musket, however, even though both weapons require the Antique Weapons skill.

The bonus for an enhancement does not accumulate across levels the way that penalties for lack of a specialty do. For instance, a character with Blunderbuss skill gains only one bonus when rolling versus the Firearms skill, despite the fact that there are two levels between the skills.

## Starting Skills

After you have chosen a profession for your character and noted down the skill groups, you can select skills for the character. The number of skills your character can have depends on his Learning and Intuition scores.

First you must choose those skills known by your character because of his profession — the things that allow him to operate effectively in whatever career he has chosen. You can choose any skills from the skill groups named by that profession. Your character can have one skill for every ten points (or fraction of) Learning. Specialized and sub-specialized skills can only be chosen if the preceding skills are also learned.

After you have chosen those skills based on your character's profession, you can choose other skills from any skill group, regardless of your character's profession. These skills represent your character's interests, hobbies, curiosity, and general knowledge. Select one skill (from any skill

While on a smuggling in deep space, Wolfgang's character and his friends are suddenly attacked by their Arcturean navigator, who is clearly ill. After overpowering the deranged pilot, Arves uses his Medicine skill to diagnose the cause of the alien's sudden outburst. Arves studied general medicine, which is good enough to treat his companions after a fight, but never studied Xeno-biology or Arcturean medicine specifically. Wolfgang never expected that his character would have to treat an Arcturean, after all. Thus, Arves does not know the specialty he needs and will suffer a penalty in any attempt to determine the cause of their pilot's strange behavior.

# The Player Core & Player Character

group) for every 15 points of Intuition your character possesses. (Ignore fractions in this case.) Additional skills gained may be within the character's profession or completely outside it. As before, your character cannot learn specializations or sub-specializations unless all previous skills are known.

As you select skills, note the names and ability used (noted in parentheses after each skill) on your character sheet.

## Ability Checks

Although your character may know how to apply a skill, this is still a long way from using the skill correctly and successfully. As a real person, you might "know" a foreign language, but could still make an error when talking with a native. Furthermore, not everyone is equally adept — not every first-year French student speaks first-year French equally well. The same is, of course, true for your characters.

Every time your character attempts to use a skill, a check must be made to see if the effort succeeds. This is done by rolling percentile dice

and comparing the result to one of your character's ability scores. The ability score used is noted in parentheses after the listing in the skill group: Fitness, Reflexes, Learning, Intuition, Psyche, Willpower, Charm, Position.

If the die roll is less than your character's ability score, the attempt succeeds. If the die roll is greater than the ability score, the attempt fails. A skill check always fails on a roll of 95-00, but there is no chance of automatic success.

## Easy and Difficult Tasks

Skills are applied to tasks of varying difficulty. For your character with mechanical skill, fixing a stubborn lawnmower is just not the same as rebuilding the engine on a sub-orbital jet. The first is a task of basic simplicity, the latter a highly demanding and complicated job. Clearly, your character's chance of success in each endeavor should not be the same.

A skill check is not required every time your character does something skill-related. For example, driving to the supermarket does not require a skill check. A character trained as a spaceship pilot does not need to make a skill check every time he travels through space. It is assumed that every skill provides a level of basic understanding. Thus, skill checks can be ignored for simple and familiar tasks.

When the result is uncertain, a skill check must be made. Characters with Firearms skill can handle a gun (without a skill check) but they may not hit the target — a skill check is required to find out. If the check succeeds, your character performs the action successfully — hitting the target or whatever. If the check fails, the action fails with appropriate consequences.

Your character can also attempt actions of even greater risk and skill, so much so that a normal skill check is still too easy. She may want to shoot an item out of a person's hand or calculate an obscure scientific formula. Based on the situa-

### HUMANITIES

- Art History (L)
  - by time period (L)
  - by country (L)
- History (L)
  - by time period (I)
  - by country (L)
- Library Research (I)
- Linguistics (L)
- Literature (L)
  - by time period (L)
- Philosophy (L)
- Rhetoric (C)
- Theology (I)



# The Player Core & Player Character

## Examples of Skill Checks

Wolfgang's character (now named Leonardo "Big Shark" Accardo) needs to make a hasty getaway from the law. Flying Carpet skill, which Leo has, uses Reflexes to determine success. Wolfgang knows his character's Reflexes score is 36.

Wasting no time, Leo jumps onto his *Mach* flying carpet, recites a quick incantation, and zips into traffic on Michigan Avenue.

No Skill Check Required

*Starring and flying the carpet is a common enough action, one Leo does every day, hence no skill check is needed.*

As he weaves through the late rush hour traffic, Leo looks back. Chicago's finest are in hot pursuit. Leo's in trouble! He can't outrun a police special carpet, especially not in this traffic. His only hope is to lose them with some quick turns. A gap in the traffic appears just ahead, so the Big Shark commands his carpet to pour in on. He darts across the lanes and whips onto a side street faster than is safe.

Skill Check Required

*Wolfgang is having his character take a chance, the equivalent of skidding around a corner during a high speed chase. Wolfgang rolls percentile dice and gets a 21, which is less than Leo's Reflexes score. The move succeeds and Leo does not crash his flying carpet.*

White-knuckled, Leo careens around the corner, narrowly missing an oncoming bus golem and the plate glass window of Bessom's Department Store. Unfortunately, the cops make the turn too, and are now gaining on him. Still speeding, Leo banks his carpet again, this time aiming for an alley. Just as he begins the turn, a giant steps from a service entrance blocking the opening! It's too late to change course, so the only thing Leo can do is try to shoot between the fellow's legs.

Modified Skill Check Required

*Taking the turn too fast already required a skill check, so the GM gives a -10 penalty for the added trick of trying to steer between the giant's legs. This reduces Leo's Reflexes score to 26 for this check. Wolfgang rolls 57 on percentile dice. The check fails and Leo doesn't make it.*

Oh no! Startled, the giant instinctively moves to protect himself, closing the gap Leo was aiming for. Too late to stop, the carpet hits the brute right at the knees, crumbling like a limp rag. As Leo is flung from the wreck, he hears the howls of the police as they too bank into the pile-up.

tion, the GM can reduce the chance of success to reflect the difficulty of the action. Guidelines for the modifiers are given in the appropriate universe books.

At other times your character may attempt something more specialized than she is trained for. In this case, even the simplest task requires a skill check (with the penalty for not knowing the specialty applied), since any specialized knowledge is assumed to be beyond your character's

basic understanding. Tasks that would require a normal skill check from a trained specialist become extremely difficult for those without the proper background, while things difficult for a specialist become nearly impossible.

## Unskilled Characters

No matter how well-rounded and prepared your character is, there are always times when he is

# The Player Core & Player Character

faced with a problem for which he simply is not trained. Faced with such a situation, your character may have little choice but to try his best.

Whether your character can even hope to succeed depends on the skill normally required to perform the task. If this is a Learned skill (one that uses the Learning ability score for skill checks), the task is impossible. Surgery, computer programming, and biochemistry are all examples of learned skills. Without the proper training, your character simply has no clue as to what should be done. Without the proper training, for example, your character simply cannot repair a malfunctioning high-energy gas laser. The only thing she would be likely to do is increase the damage.

Actions requiring non-Learning skills can be attempted even by those who lack the proper training. In this case, the character has a default chance equal to half the attribute score. Even the most basic actions require a skill check (there is no automatic success) and the ability score is halved for the attempt. The other penalties — for specialization and difficulty — still apply.

Leo "Big Shark" Accardo has a tip on a shipment of smuggled magical artifacts stored in a warehouse near the trainyards, just the evidence he needs to spring his client. All he has to do is break in and get a few pictures. That night at the back door, Leo figures he ought to check for burglar alarms before forcing his way in. Leo knows the basics of glyphs (Glyph Analysis skill) but is no expert in burglar alarms (Protection Glyph specialization). Checking the door for alarms is pretty basic for a specialist, but for Leo a skill check against Learning (which is only 23 with an additional -5 for non-specialization) is required. The check is made and a 12 is rolled — success. Sure enough, the door is enchanted.

Now Leo tries to deactivate the alarm. This would require a skill check for a specialist, and so is very difficult for Leo. The skill check is made with a -15 applied to the ability score (-5 for non-specialization, -10 for the action) for a total 8 or less chance of success. Amazingly enough, a 04 is rolled and Leo manages to temporarily dispel the alarm!



# The Player Character & Player Core

## Margin Ratings

Many times, it is interesting or important to know not just whether your character succeeds or fails at a task, but also to what degree. Was he able to sail through the task with no difficulty or was it an edge-of-the-seat near thing? If he fails, will there be disastrous consequences? The degree of success or failure can add an exciting element of story and color to the game session.

In most cases, the actual outcome of the skill doesn't change, regardless of how well the character did, so you can simply translate the skill check into story details. Roll well below the success number and your character did the task extremely well. Roll high — close to failing — and it was a struggle, but your character succeeded. Roll drastically greater than the number needed and your character botched things up badly. For example, your character, Anya, and her companion, George, are trying to jump across a pit, with a villain in hot pursuit. Your character succeeds, rolling a 17 (a 54 or less was needed), while her companion barely rolls under the necessary number (69 out of 71). Right behind you, the villain attempts the jump. The die roll is 93, well over the 51 needed for success. In this case, the GM might say, "Anya — you clear the pit easily, then bend down and help George, who nearly failed, and is clinging to the edge by the very fingertips. The thug chasing slips just as he goes to leap. There's a horrid scream as he falls out of sight." Both player characters succeeded and there was nothing gained by doing better, while the thug failed and would have fallen in any case. If Anya had not been there, George would have simply hoisted himself over the edge to safety.

Sometimes you need to know not only if your character succeeded or failed but by what degree. These are known as critical successes or failures. Skills that require them are defined in the universe books. In *For Faerie, Queen and Country*,

Lewis the Forger is altering a will. A successful forgery checks results in a will that foils most people, but Lewis needs a critical success to fool the court's handwriting expert. In the BUGHUNTERS™ universe, Harmon, the demolitions man, is faced with a complicated time bomb. Success will obviously defuse the device, but there is the risk he will pull the wrong wire. This would be a critical failure, causing the bomb to immediately explode.

Critical successes and failures are defined by margin ratings. Success margins are noted as S# — S2 or S5, for example. Critical failures are noted by F# — F8 or F7 are examples of these.

In such instances, the success or failure margin is found by reading the "ones" digit of the skill check roll. For a critical success, the skill check must be successful and the ones digit must be equal to or less than the success margin. For a critical failure, the check must first be failed and the ones digit then be equal to or greater than the failure margin. For example, Lewis has a 45 on his attempt to forge a signature. The skill notes a success margin of 1 (S1) for a perfect forgery. You roll the skill check and the result is 40. Lewis succeeds! Not only that, it is a critical success since 0 is less than the success margin. If Lewis had rolled a 29, the forgery would have been successful but not perfect. On a roll greater than 45, the forgery was a complete failure.

Note that, statistically, margin ratings give characters with higher skills a greater chance of amazing successes and a lower chance of horrible failures at any particular task than characters with lower skill levels have. In effect, success and failure margin ratings serve as fractions of a character's skill, so as that skill increases, the margins become automatically more beneficial. Applying them to the ones digit of a roll simply makes it very quick and easy to identify them during play.

# Experience

## Experience

Part of every role-playing game is improving your character — adding skills and increasing ability scores. This way your character gains new powers and improves old ones. This is done by earning experience points to be used by your characters. Experience points are a simple way to measure all the intangible things your character gains from surviving dangerous adventures, risking heroic perils, and "living" an everyday life through your role playing. After all, it stands to reason that when your character survives a dangerous shoot-out, uses his skills, or fast talks his way past a spaceport customs inspector he improves. His hand-eye coordination might get a little better, his confidence grow. Experience points are a way to measure these slow improvements.

## The Goals of the Game

Experience points are not the be-all and end-all of role-playing. If you hope to be a good role-player (or already are one) then your reasons for playing should be more than just earning more experience points and making your character more powerful.

Once in the warehouse, Wolfgang's character, Leo "Big Shark" Accardo, begins searching through the crates. Suddenly, just as he finds a suspicious looking one labeled "Excalibur," a footstep scrapes behind him. Leo spins, pulling his gun as he does, to find himself facing a centaur thug. A quick kick sends Leo sprawling, gun clattering across the floor. A second blow just misses, shattering the crate next to his head, spilling the contents — a sword — half out of the box. In desperation, Leo grabs the sword and pulls it from the box. "Ain't the same as bullets but you'll have to do." As he clumsily swings the sword up, it starts to glow.

*Wolfgang never thought his character would need a sword, so Leo does not have Fencing skill. Since Fencing uses Reflexes, Leo can try swordfighting, but only at half his normal ability score.*

A role-playing game is a *game*, first and foremost, and games are meant to be fun.

This should seem obvious, but too often it is easy to lose sight of this fact in the pursuit of more experience for your character. Good players





# Experience

don't focus on the powers and items their characters possess, whom they have defeated, or what they might rule. Naturally, they strive for these things, but they also get involved in the stories, act out their character's personality, and work with the GM and other players. For these players, it is perfectly possible to have an exciting, enjoyable game session without ever once earning a point of experience for their characters.

Place the following goals above the mere "earning" of experience points. If you do, rewards for you and your character will come automatically.

- Have a good time playing.
- Act the part of your character when playing.
- Don't let your good time ruin everyone else's fun.

## Awarding and Earning Experience

It is not the place of this rule booklet to list everything your character can do to earn experience points. In fact, because the AMAZING ENGINE™ system has so many different universes, a single list is impossible. Your character can't earn experience for fixing a computer when you're playing in a fantasy universe of faeries and boggarts.

Each universe has its own list of experience point awards, designed to suit the needs of that universe. In a universe where high-tech space marines battle hideous aliens, combat is important. Players can expect characters to be rewarded for surviving battles, defeating enemies, and show tactical skill. At the other extreme, another universe casts the player characters as ambassadors and detectives in a fairy-filled England. Shooting an attendant of Queen Maeve's court or blowing up a fairy ring with a keg of gunpowder are not the goals of that universe. Instead players are rewarded for solving problems, preventing wars, and talking their way through sticky situations. The experience awards for one

will not work for the other. Nonetheless, all share some general features in common.

**Successful adventures.** In any universe, a successful adventure warrants some experience points. "Success" depends on the universe and the adventure. Sometimes it is enough to just survive; in other instances, a specific foe must be defeated or a problem solved.

**Using skills.** People learn by doing. In the AMAZING ENGINE system this is noted by rewarding characters with experience points for using their skills in ways relevant to the adventure. Relevant means your character just can't spend the day shooting at bottles to increase his combat skill — bottles don't shoot back, after all. (If the skill were target shooting, it'd be a different story.) Using the skill has to involve some risk or real chance of failure for the character.

**Role-playing.** Role-playing is the object of the AMAZING ENGINE system, so good role-playing is rewarded with experience points. This is a very subjective call. It depends on the personality you have established for your player character, the GM, and the situation at the moment. Good role-playing also means keeping what *you as a player* know separate from what *your character* knows. You as a player know that sticking your hand into a fire is a bad idea, but your character, Oog the caveman, discoverer of fire, hasn't had the chance to learn that lesson.

## Experience and Multiple Universes

In most role-playing games, you play only a single character at a time, and so only have to track the experience points earned by a single character. In the AMAZING ENGINE system, however, situations are often different. The most common possibility is that you will play in one universe, where your character earns experience, and then change to a different universe. What happens to all the experience you have earned to date? Few players want to just give up all their

# Experience

advantages and start over. In the AMAZING ENGINE™ system you don't have to.

Whenever your character earns experience points in an AMAZING ENGINE universe, you must immediately assign these to either your current player character or your player core. Points that assigned to your player core are forever beyond the reach of your current player character (or player characters). These points can only benefit characters created in future game sessions. Points assigned to your player character are available for immediate use, but cannot be given later to another player character in a different universe.

Within these two areas — player core and player character — you have four options for assigning your experience points. With points assigned to the player character, you can tax your character's abilities, spending experience points during play to temporarily improve ability scores, or you can use these experience points to make permanent improvements to your existing character. With the points you give to the player core, you can buy extra dice for that player core, thereby improving future characters, or transfer experience points to a new character in the same or different universe.

Michelle's character, Pit. Sgt. Adrian 2 Selinko, United Terra Reconnaissance and Peacekeeping Force, has just returned to the "booze-barge" (as UTRPFers refer to their HQ on Earth's L-5 station) from a bug-hunting mission on a mining outpost at Barnard's Star. The GM awards experience for that mission, and Sgt. Selinko receives 75 experience points for repulsing a swarm of chitinous predators. Michelle must assign the oints immediately, so she adds 50 to Adrian's xp total and the remaining 25 to the Player Core XP line of her character sheet.

## Taxing Abilities

The most immediate use of experience points is to spend them during the course of play to temporarily increase an ability score. This is called *taxing* your character — forcing her to think a little more or strain a little harder. Taxing can increase her chance of success with a skill, make a heroic effort to lift a great weight, or pour on that extra burst of speed in a chase, for example.

When you want to tax your character, you must tell your GM *before you roll any dice*. Once the dice are rolled, your chance has passed, so be ready to make up your mind quickly. At the same time, you should tell the GM how much experience you will spend to make the effort.

There are four limitations on how much experience your character can use to modify the ability score.

- Your character must have unused experience to spend on the attempt. (This is true for all uses of experience. There is no such thing as negative experience.)
- Experience is spent in increments of 5 points (5, 10, 15, etc.).
- The chance of success can never be greater than double the normal chance for the situation.

Points spent to improve an ability check are subtracted from the character's total, regardless of whether the check succeeds or fails.

## Improving Your Character

A more permanent method of improving your character is to buy points to add to your character's ability score. Unlike modifying an ability score, these purchases are permanent. They are also more expensive. The cost of these improvements varies from universe to universe. In one it may take three experience points to raise an ability one point; in another the same change might require ten experience points.

# Experience

There are two limitations on buying increased ability scores.

- No ability score can be increased beyond 90.
- Permanent improvements cannot be bought during the course of an adventure. They can only be bought after your character has had time to reflect on his accomplishments.

Increases bought this way are permanent for your character. Erase the old ability score and write down the new one, then subtract the experience points spent.

Players can also buy new skills for their characters, improving by increasing the range of their abilities. The experience point costs for buying skills can vary widely from both skill to skill and universe to universe. Costs and procedures are described in each universe book as needed.

## Improving the Player Core

For long-term planning, you can look beyond your immediate character and instead assign points to your player core. With these points you can improve your player core. By spending experience points, you can buy additional dice for your attribute pools. The purchase of additional dice has no effect on current characters; it only helps characters created in future universes and game sessions.

Each die of improvement to an attribute pool costs 100 experience points. Since improvements to the player core have no effect on your current character, the purchase can be made at any time.

Although theoretically there is no limit to the number of dice you can buy for a single attribute pool, AMAZING ENGINE™ universes may have attribute or ability score limits on characters in that universe. It is best to check with your GM before over-investing in an attribute pool for your character.

Colonel Sir Jameson Pickering, K.C.M.G., ret., (Wolfgang's character in *For Faerie, Queen, and Country*) suddenly senses a wave of magical power while attending an important diplomatic ball. Frantically looking about, he sees the villainous sorceress, Countess Angevin, standing in the shadows on the portico. Their eyes meet and before Sir Jameson can warn anyone, a magical paralysis creeps over the colonel as the countess imposes her seductive will. The situation is dire, so Wolfgang decides it's time to tax Sir Jameson's abilities to break the spell. The normal chance to resist possession is equal to 1/2 Willpower. Sir Jameson's Willpower is 46, halved to 23 for the check. Wolfgang spends the maximum, 20 points, to bring his ability score back up to 43 for this check. The dice roll is 32 — with strain Sir Jameson breaks the sorceress's gaze.

## Transfer to New Characters

One unique feature of the AMAZING ENGINE system is the opportunity to role-play in a variety of different universes. In other role-playing games, this would mean giving up any experience your previous character had earned. In essence, all the time you had spent playing would come to naught when you started in a new game world.

That is not the case in the AMAZING ENGINE system.

Each time you create a new character, you can transfer experience from the player core to that character, with the following limitations.

- Both the old and new character must come from the same player core.
- The two characters cannot be active in the same universe. (A new character can appear in the same universe if the previous character is dead or permanently retired.)

# Movement

Thus, in the MAGITECH™ universe, your new character could profit from the adventures of that old BUGHUNTERS™ marine sergeant. Consider the transfer like a withdrawal from a bank account. The points you assign to the new character cannot be "redeposited" later on, although new experience points can be earned and assigned to the player core.

## Experience and Character Death

Unpleasant as the thought is, your characters can (and will) die. When this happens any experience assigned to that player character is lost (assuming you have not used it all attempting to keep your character alive). Experience points assigned to the player core are not lost. These points can be used by future characters created from the same core.

Once a character dies, you can create a new character (using the old player core) for the same universe. This character can be assigned experience from the player core under the restrictions given above.

## Movement

Character movement is divided into three different speeds: walking, running, and sprinting. Each speed is defined by a speed in meters per turn and a duration in minutes or turns.

## Measurements

To ease the transition from one universe to another, the AMAZING ENGINE™ game system uses a consistent set of measures for figuring movement, weight, and game time.

In the AMAZING ENGINE system all distances, weights, and volumes are given according to the metric system. Although unfamiliar to some, the metric system is best suited to meet the needs of universes that range from high fantasy to

hard science fiction. Distances are given in meters and kilometers, weights in grams and kilograms, etc.

Game time — the imaginary time spent by your character to do anything (as opposed to the real time it takes you to describe your character's actions, roll dice, think, etc., while playing) — game time is organized into turns, minutes, hours, and days. A turn is roughly equal to 10 seconds of action and is used for combat and other time-important actions. Minutes, hours and the rest are self-explanatory. A given universe may have weeks, months, and years equal to those of our Earth or may be quite different (especially in science fiction universes).

## Speed

**Walking** is the slowest and most common movement. A person walking can cover up to 15 meters per turn. (In general people unconsciously adjust their strides to that of their companions to walk at a uniform rate.) Characters can walk for an indefinite amount of time, although the hourly movement rate of 5,000 meters should be used if characters travel for more than 30 minutes at a time.

**Running** is a brisk jog or long loping stride, good for covering considerable distances at a quick pace. It is not as flat out fast as your character can run, since your character is trying conserve some of his strength for the long haul. Most characters run their Fitness in meters per turn. A character with a 32 fitness could run 32 meters in a single turn. Notably unfit characters (those with a Fitness of 14 or less) run and walk at the same speed — 15 meters per turn. A character can run for minutes equal to his Fitness rating.

**Sprinting** is a burst of speed, in which your character tries to cover a short distance as quickly as he can. Each turn your character can sprint meters equal to twice his Fitness. (A character with 32 Fitness sprints 64 meters in 10 seconds.)

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# Movement

Sprinting can be kept up for turns equal one-tenth your character's Fitness (rounded down). Amazingly unfit characters (those with a Fitness of 7 or less) cannot sprint or run, although they still walk at normal speed.

## Carrying Capacity

Another important modifier for your character's speed in any situation is the amount of weight she is carrying. The movement rates given assume your character is not loaded down with excess goods that would slow her pace.

Your character can carry goods (in kilograms) equal to her Fitness score without penalty. A character with a Fitness of 21 could carry 21 kilos (approximately 46 lbs.) of gear without significant difficulty. When carrying up to twice this weight, your character's running and sprinting are halved. At three times the base weight, your character cannot sprint or run and may only walk meters equal to her Fitness score before having to rest.

If a player tries to tax his character's Fitness by spending experience points (so that she can lift a greater than normal weight) the benefit lasts

until the character fails a Willpower check. Like an Olympic weightlifter, the character puts her legs and back into a heroic effort to lift the great weight. Every muscle in her body strains until her Willpower finally gives out. If the character fails this check, she suffers a point of fatigue damage. Players can use experience to tax improve their chances of passing this check, too.

## Pushing the Limits

It is possible for characters run and sprint faster or farther than their normal allowances by taxing their Fitness score and making ability checks.

Any character can sprint faster in a given turn than is normally allowed by taxing his ability (spending experience points to increase Fitness). However, a character never increase his speed by more than 50% this way (thus he cannot add more than half his Fitness score). This increase is effective for only a single turn, thus the character must continue to pay experience points to maintain the pace the next turn.

Any character can also try to exceed her duration. At the start of each turn (when sprinting)

Movement Rates				
Movement Type	Distance per:		Duration	Endurance Check
	Turn	Minute		
Walk	15m.	90m.	Indefinite	None
Run	Fitness	Fitness x 6	Minutes = Fitness	Yes
Sprint	Fitness x2	Fitness x 12*	Turns = Fitness/10	Yes
* If character has sufficient duration.				

# Combat

or minute (when running) that your character attempts to run in excess of her normal duration, a check must be made against Willpower by rolling percentile dice. If under the character's Willpower score, she keeps going for that turn or minute; otherwise, she must stop since she is exhausted. Characters who fail the check suffer 1-2 points of fatigue damage. Note that experience can be spent to increase your character's Willpower.

## Resting

Flat-out sprinting and long-distance running is an exhausting business and your character must rest at the end of any dash. The time spent resting is minutes equal to the minutes spent running or turns spent sprinting. Sprinting three turns calls for resting three minutes. Characters resting cannot run or sprint but can still walk up to ten meters per turn.

## Vehicles and Special Movement

Since the AMAZING ENGINE™ universe might encompass anything from lizard-drawn chariots to anti-gravity sky-sleds, rules for vehicle movement are part of the universe books. In

addition the universe books may present unique movement rules to reflect special conditions of the that universe. Weightlessness, heavy gravity, magical terrains, or other dimensions are all possible complications unique to particular universes.

## Combat

Sooner or later fighting becomes a part of every role-playing game. The AMAZING ENGINE system is no exception, although the emphasis on fighting (and just how dangerous it is) will suit the story needs of the universe. For example, combat in *For Faerie, Queen, and Country* is an infrequent thing and dangerous when it occurs. A character can be killed with a single shot. At the other extreme, battles are frequent and heroic in *Galactos Barrier*, a swashbuckling universe of high space opera. The universe of BUGHUNTERS™, where characters are the elite of the interstellar armed forces, is almost entirely combat-centered.

Because of the differences between universes, the things described here are basic procedures that do not change from universe to universe, such as how to make an attack roll and the differences between range combat and melees. *Every*

Carrying Capacity	
Kilos Equal to:	Effect on Movement:
Fitness score	No effect
Fitness score x 2	Sprinting and running halved
Fitness score x 3	No sprinting or running allowed, must rest after walking meters = Fitness score

# Combat

*universe book has additional combat rules. At a minimum these include weapons available in that universe — a maser rifle just won't be found in a world of armored knights and dragons. It could appear in a world of cybernetic knights and chrome steel dragon tanks, however.*

Some universes, such as BUGHUNTERS™, place a greater emphasis on combat than others. Accordingly, the combat rules for these universes will incorporate detailed rules for things like recoil, penetration, knock-back, even special combat maneuvers. Other universes may keep the combat rules to the barest minimum in favor of other role-playing aspects.

## The Combat Sequence

Because combats can be confusing events with six or seven characters to a side each trying to do something different, the AMAZING ENGINE™ system (like most role-playing games) organizes combat into a series of steps, each complete sequence taking one round, each round being *roughly* 10 seconds of time (to allow the GM flexibility in resolving combat actions.) Each round repeats the sequence of events until one side is defeated or manages to escape.

## Advantage

Advantage is the "jump" one character or group might have on another when the encounter begins. It is used in situations such as two groups (friend and foe) stumbling onto each other unexpectedly, a group being betrayed by someone they trusted, or the party walking into an ambush. The character or party who has the advantage automatically gets the first action and may have a bonus on chances to hit the targets.

Advantage is checked at the beginning of any encounter, before any other actions are taken. After the first round of combat, advantage is normally no longer checked, since both sides are

perfectly aware what each group is up to — at least in general terms. In some instances, however, additional advantage checks may be needed: a new attacker appearing from an unexpected direction, or an event occurring that was unanticipated from one or both sides.

The basic method for determining advantage is for both sides to roll percentile dice and compare the result to the highest Psyche score in the party. If the check is passed, the group is forewarned, however slightly. If the check is failed, the group is unprepared and the other side gains the advantage. If both sides succeed, no one is caught unprepared. If both sides fail, everyone is caught flat-footed. If either side rolls a 95-00, that group is *surprised* — caught completely off-guard — and is particularly vulnerable. (The properties, equipment, and situations of different universes can modify a character's check. Some possibilities include psionic powers to detect thoughts, or thermal sensors to spot what is normally unseen. Any modifiers will be noted in the universe book.)

The side with the advantage automatically goes first on the opening round of battle. They gain a +5 modifier on any attack or action opposed by the other group. The side without advantage goes second and suffers a -5 modifier on any like action.

If one party is surprised, they essentially do nothing for an entire round during which their opponents have the freedom to move, attack, talk, run away, or whatever (with the +5 modifier) without having the surprised group react. In the next round, the surprised group is considered unprepared while their attackers have the advantage (they act first and gain the +5 modifier, while their opponents act second and suffer a -5 modifier).

# Combat

## Declaring Actions

Except for situations of advantage and surprise, you must declare what action your character will take *before* knowing in what order both sides will act (the same applies to the GM). Tell your GM what action your character will take in the coming round. Try to be as specific as possible, given that you don't know the intentions of the other side. For example, if your character attacks, state his target in advance. Your GM has many things to keep track of, so the more you help, the quicker and more exciting the game will be.

In general, it is best to keep actions short, ideally something that could be completed in ten seconds. Not only does this help prevent confusion, it also means your character is ready to react to new situations in the next round. You should also be ready to say quickly what your character will do, since your GM can penalize your character for your hesitation. Combat requires snap

## Combat Round Sequence

- I Determine Advantage (1st Combat round only)
- II. Players declare character actions; GM decides NPC actions
- III. Determine order of actions
- IV. Resolve actions

judgments and you should be ready to play the part accordingly. Reasonable questions are allowed, but delaying the game while you try to make a decision is apt to result in your character losing his action that round.

## Initiative

If neither side has an advantage or surprise in combat, you need to know what order everything



# Combat

happens in. This is done by determining initiative. Initiative is determined at the beginning of every combat round, unless one side has advantage over the other (because of die roll or GM's ruling). A single initiative is normally determined for the entire group, although universes with detailed combat rules may require each individual to roll initiative.

Initiative is checked by rolling 1d10 and modifying the result. The modifier is equal to 10% (rounded down) of the character with the best Reflexes score. (For simplicity, the modifier is equal to the tens digit of that score — a character with a 37 Reflexes adds 3 to the die roll.) Only those characters present and active in the combat are considered. The side with the higher modified die roll acts first.

In addition to characters, any thing or event beyond the control of either group has its own unmodified initiative roll. If the enemy lobbs a grenade at your character's feet, at the start of the next round the GM secretly rolls 1d10 to see

when it explodes. Your character may have a chance to throw it back or dive for cover — or he may not.

Prepared actions — like holding a gun on someone and demanding surrender — are special initiative situations. Normally the prepared character automatically goes first. ("Move and I shoot, you ugly bug.") However, your character can try to beat out the opponent if you roll a Reflexes check. (The GM may apply modifiers to your chance of success.) If you succeed, your character can take an action before his challenger reacts. Fail, and he just was not quick enough.

## Hitting Your Target

Whenever your character attacks (or is attacked), actually hitting what was aimed at is no guarantee. Virtually all attacks require a die roll to see if the target is hit or missed. Only the inescapable are exempted from this rule.

Surprise Outcomes					
	Condition		NPC		
			Successful Psyche Check	Failed Psyche Check	95-00
	P L A Y E R	Successful Psyche Check	No advantage	Player has advantage	Player has surprise
		Failed Psyche Check	NPC has advantage	No advantage	No advantage
		95-00	NPC has surprise	No advantage	No advantage

# Combat

WO1 Selinko (having been promoted to Warrant Officer status for her skilled handling of the Barnard's Star mission) is leading her squad through a nasty piece of grass-forest on "Acey-Two" (Alpha Centauri's second planet). Just ahead, hidden in the thick blades of grass, is a nest of "Stalkers" — vicious, carnivorous reptiles the size of tigers. In single file, the squad advances; the point trooper enters the clearing, and . . .

*The GM calls for a Psyche check from Selinko's player, Michele, as her character is the leader of the squad. At the same time, the GM notes that the Stalkers, not expecting an attack, have a chance to be surprised, and makes a check for them too. The GM's roll is 83; the creatures have a Psyche of 73, so the check fails. Michele rolls an 18; her character's Psyche is 37, so the check succeeds. Selinko's squad has the advantage on the first round of the encounter.*

Spotting the beasts, Selinko orders the point trooper to open fire while the rest of the squad fans out. The Stalkers are hit by a burst of flechette rounds and out-flanked before they even have a chance to react.

For melees and ranged combat your character's basic chance to hit is equal to his Reflexes. However, this chance is modified according to the target area and the circumstances of the instance. If the roll is equal to or less than your character's modified Reflexes score, the attack hits the target and damage is determined. If the roll exceeds the score, the attack misses.

## Target Areas

Anytime your character makes an attack (or anything makes an attack), you must specify one of three target areas — general, non-vital, or vital. Each target area has different chances to hit and

Although Selinko's men have managed to cripple the bugs, the battle is far from over. As the haze from the plasma bolts clears, the bugs spring through the grass forest, their wicked talons gleaming in anticipation of the easy kill. In the flash of a photoceptor, they clear the space separating them from the advancing squad. "Hose 'em!" Selinko shouts over the squeals of the hideous aliens.

*At this point the GM calls for actions. The players, following Michele's lead, announce their intentions to shoot. The GM notes which aliens will attack and calls for initiative rolls. Anthony's character has the highest Reflexes on the squad (56) so he rolls the die and gets a 5, which is modified to 10 (+5 for his character's Reflexes). The GM rolls a 9 for the bugs, adding 6 for their Reflexes. The bugs attack first.*

Before her command can be followed, the bugs spring forward, talons flashing!

different damage effects if your character does hit.

**General** targets are anywhere on the opponent's body — your character is just trying to land a fist or make a shot without concern for pinpoint accuracy. General targeting allows your character to use his full Reflexes score before other modifications and does not alter the damage done by the attack.

**Non-vital** targets are those areas of the opponent that will stun, wound, or injure, but are unlikely to kill. Trying to knock someone out or wing them in the arm is a non-vital attack. Your character's Reflexes are halved when making a non-vital attack and the chance of body damage is reduced by 2.

**Vital** targets are just the opposite — vulnerable areas that could lead to sudden death if injured. On humans, for example, these include the head and the area around the heart. Attacks on vital areas are particularly difficult, and so the

# Combat

chance of hitting is only 10% your character's normal Reflexes score (rounded up). The chance of body damage, however, is increased by 3 when such an attack is made.

## Ranged Combat

Ranged combat (attacking with a weapon that shoots, flies, or is thrown) has special rules. While many of these depend on the universe (and its technology), certain features are common to all.

In each universe book, missile weapons (if any) are listed for range and damage. Ranges are divided into short, *medium*, and long categories (*extreme* may also exist in some universes), measured in meters. When shooting at targets greater than short range, your character suffers a penalty on his chance to hit. The exact penalty depends on the universe, since weapon effectiveness changes with each technology.

Furthermore, every character has a sighting range, normally of 50 yards. Characters can see beyond this distance, of course, but when firing at targets beyond the sighting range, only general target areas can be used.

## Combat Modifiers

Few battles are straight-up matches where heroes and villains battle it out toe-to-toe. Most are moving affairs with unique situations — armor to wear, things to hide behind, and things to get in the way. These situations are handled by combat modifiers, which are given in the universe books. In general things that modify combat include:

**Movement.** Movement affects ranged combat, making targets harder to hit, but has no effect on hand-to-hand combat.

**Armor.** Depending on the universe, characters may have some type of armor, be it the leather

and metal of fantasy or the suit of spun-fiber body armor and force-field projector. Most armor reduces the amount of damage a hit causes. However, a few types — particularly things such as magnetic force fields or slippery suits — may make the character physically harder to hit. These types of armor modify the attacker's chance to hit.

**Cover.** The most common type of protection is getting behind something, preferably solid, so your character can't be hurt. Cover is divided into *soft* and *hard* cover. Soft cover is anything you can shoot through that still conceals the target — bushes, leaves, tall grass, curtains, even smoke are all types of soft cover. Soft cover reduces the attacker's chance to hit. Hard cover is anything solid that conceals the target — rocks, walls, sandbags, or tree trunks, for example. Hard cover has modifiers like soft cover and may limit the target areas that can be chosen. What can't be seen can't be shot.

## Damage

Every weapon in a given universe, be it fist, enchanted saber, or accelerated magnetic field rifle firing depleted uranium flechettes, is rated for damage.

Target Area	Chance to Hit	Dam. Effect
General	Reflexes	None
Non-vital	50% Reflexes	-2 to type
Vital	10% Reflexes	+3 to type

# Magic, Psionics, & Special Powers

Damage is given as two numbers — a die range for the number of points of damage caused, and a *lethality rating*. For example, in *For Faerie, Queen, and Country*, the service revolver's damage is 2d6/5. It causes 2-12 points of damage per hit and has a lethality rating of 5. Whenever a hit is scored, the dice are rolled and that amount is subtracted from the target's fatigue or body points.

## Lethality Ratings

It is possible to seriously injure someone with anything, but it is a lot easier with some weapons than others. A hit from a club hurts but most often only raises ugly bruises, while a shotgun blast tends to have much more fatal effects. The differences between weapons are reflected, in part, by their *lethality ratings*, the chance that any hit will cause body damage instead of the normal fatigue damage.

Each time you roll for a hit, you must note not only whether your character hit or missed but, if he did hit, what the ones digit rolled was. If this number is equal to or less than the lethality rating of the weapon (modified for the target area chosen), the damage caused by this hit is subtracted from the target's body points, otherwise all damage comes from the target's fatigue points. Lethality numbers can never be less than 1 or greater than 10 (0 on the die).

## Magic, Psionics, and Special Powers

Since the AMAZING ENGINE™ system covers the span of universes from science-fiction to fantasy, mysterious magic, awesome mental powers, super science, even superpowers are all possible elements of any universe. You could play a magic-wielding fairy in Victorian England, an empathic alien from Alpha Centauri, a bio-engineered trooper of the distant future, or a psychic private

WO1 Selinko watches in horror as the xenofoms outmaneuver her squad, three of the creatures lunging in for the kill.

*The GM rolls three attacks, one for each stalker, and decides that all attacks will be at general target areas, as this is easiest. The Stalkers have Reflexes of 62. The die rolls are 83, 17, and 23, so two of the creatures hit and one misses. Each attack causes 3d6 points of damage and has a lethality rating of 4. The first hit (17) causes 6 points of fatigue damage, subtracted from the trooper's 25 total. The second attack does 8 points of body damage (because the ones result was 3), but the trooper has only 7 body points.*

One of the soldiers reels back, cut, but not seriously, by a xenofom's slashing claws. The other trooper isn't so lucky, as a Stalker strikes him dead in front of platoon leader Selinko.

"Eat this," she snarls while unloading her flechette clip into the creature's gaping maw.

detective in the modern day. These are only a few of the possibilities that might appear for your character — it all depends on the universe you play in.

Because there is such a wide range of possibility, each universe must have its own rules for such powers — if they exist. These differences ensure that no two universes will ever be alike, but it also means that no rules can be given here.

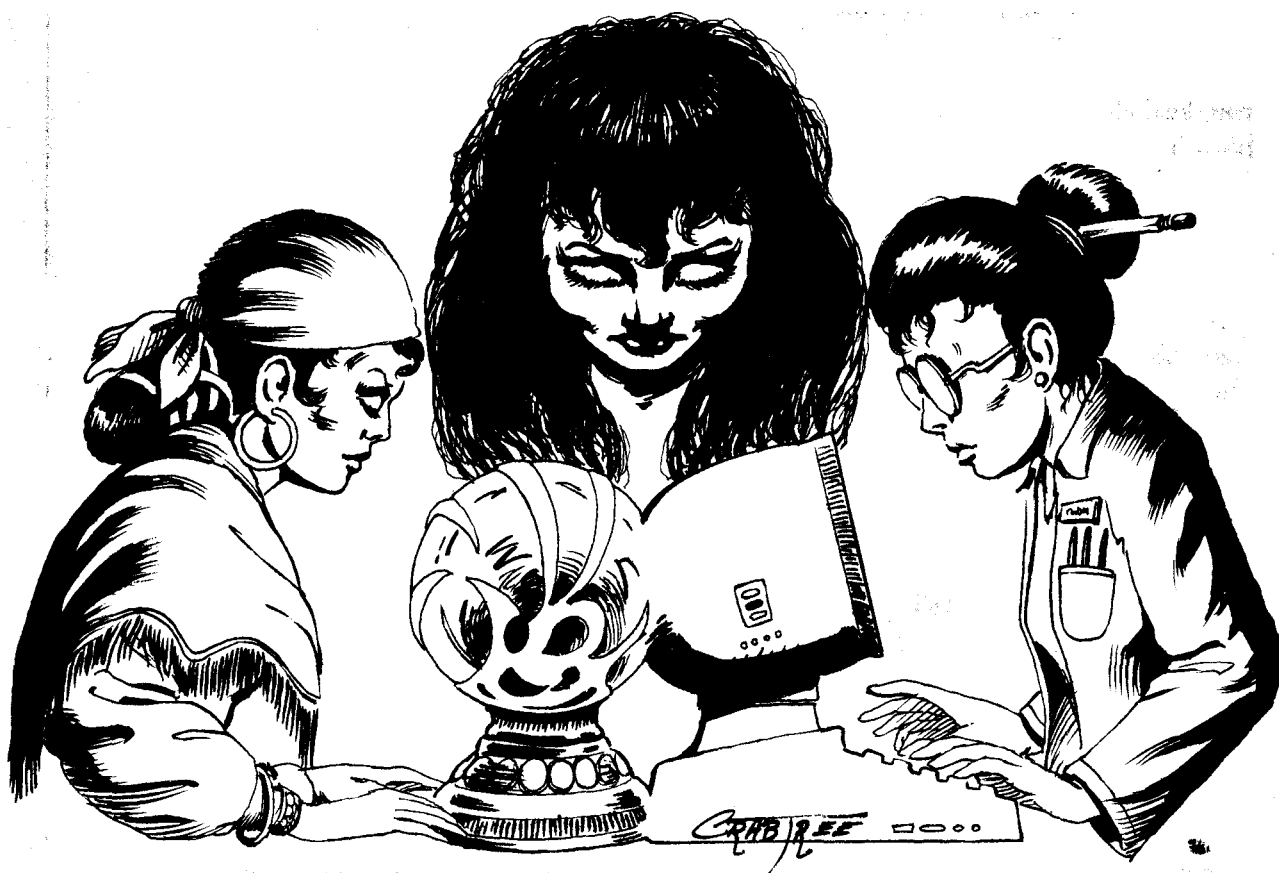
As a player or GM, you must be aware that greater opportunities may await your character (or non-player characters) in the universe opened by the AMAZING ENGINE game system — magic, psychic powers, cybernetics, genetic engineering, and other things more bizarre than can be imagined now. All these are potentials for your characters and campaigns!



# AMAZINE ENGINE™ System

## Player Core Sheet

Physique Rank:	Intellect Rank:	Spirit Rank:	Influence Rank:
Fitness:	Learning:	Psyche:	Charm:
Reflexes:	Intuition:	Willpower:	Position:





# AMAZING ENGINE™ Rule Booklet

## System Guide

by David "Zeb" Cook

This is a game system unlike any you've played before.

In this booklet are the rules you need to create a character core. With that character core, you can create any number of player characters for any number of game universes within the AMAZING ENGINE™ game system. You can create wizards, mercenaries, alien technologists, xeniform thieves—any kind of character, from nearly any kind of fantasy or science fiction setting, is possible with these rules and the appropriate Universe Book.

This System Guide also explains the rudiments of combat (how does my character hit things?) and skills (what does my character know?). Plentiful examples take you step by step through the character generation process, and illustrate the concepts behind this system's skill uses.

These rules are designed to be used in conjunction with the Universe Books. You must have both this booklet and a Universe Book in order to play within the AMAZING ENGINE game system.

Look for the first four Universe Books, coming in 1993/94:

**For Faerie, Queen, and Country**  
(June 1993)

**BUGHUNTERS™** (June 1993)

**MAGITECH™** (October 1993)

**Galactos Barrier** (January 1994)

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